STATE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS BEFORE THE STATE ENGINEER AND CHIEF OF THE DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES

000

In the Matter of Application 15180 by Albert Angus to Appropriate Water from Basin Creek Tributary to Walker Basin Creek in Kern County for Irrigation Purposes.

000

Decision A 15180 D. 813	<u> </u>
Decided December 22, 1954	
	000
In Attendance at Investigation Con at the Site of the Proposed Approp	ducted by the Division of Water Resource riation on December 7, 1953:
Albert Angus	Applicant
Mrs. Albert Angus	Applicant's wife
G. W. Palmer	Applicant:s attorney
Betty W. Beaudreau	Protestant
Alfred Siemen	Protestant Beaudreau's attorney
Fred Cannon	Protestant
Walker Rankin	Protestant
Ieroy Rankin	Protestant
Marguerite Ashe	Representing the protestants Rankin
J. J. Heacock	Senior Hydraulic Engineer Division of Water Resources Department of Public Works Pennesenting the State Engineer

OPINION

General Description of the Project

The application contemplates the appropriation of 15 acre-feet per annum from Basin Creek, tributary to Walker Basin Creek, in Kern County, the water to be collected between December 1 and March 31, diversion to be effected by means of a small earth and rock dam and conveyance by an earth ditch 3 cubic feet per second in capacity, the ditch to end at an off-stream reservoir 2 acres in surface area and 15 acre-feet in capacity. The water is wanted for the irrigation of 80 acres of general crops located within the SE2 of Section 6, T29S R33E, MDB&M, between April 1 and August 15. According to the application the land to be irrigated has no other water right or source of water supply. According to the application as originally submitted diversion was to be effected at a point within the SW2 NW2 of Section 5, T29S R33E, MDB&M. At the applicant's request by letter dated April 2, 1954, Application 15180 was amended to show the proposed point of diversion as being located within the quarter quarter section to the west of the one originally described.

Protests

Betty W. Beaudreau protests the proposed appropriation claiming that there is not enough water and further that she owns the land at the proposed point of diversion (as originally described) and that the applicant has no right of access thereto. She bases her claim of rights to the use of water from Basin Creek upon riparian ownership and upon an appropriation under Application 11177, Permit 6600. As to the extent of her present and past use of water she states:

"... due to insufficient water full development could not be made in recent years. At present I have need of water now to irrigate approximately 500 acres of grain now seeded. Also watering of stock (livestock)".

She states that her point of diversion is located within the SW# NE# of Section 12,

T29S R32E. She mentions no conditions under which her protest may be disregarded and dismissed.

Fred Cannon protests that if the water that the applicant seeks to appropriate is taken and used in the manner proposed a shortage will occur in the supply for his own (Cannon's) irrigating and stockwatering. Protestant Cannon bases his claim of a right to the use of water from Basin Creek upon a notice recorded in Kern County on March 16, 1894. As to the extent of present and past use of water this protestant states:

*In my knowledge water has been diligently used on my land since 1926, for watering of livestock and irrigating, and as a matter of information for many years prior to this time."

Protestant Cannon states that his diversion point is located within Section 6, T29S R33E, states further that under no conditions may his protest be disregarded and dismissed.

R. Vern Schell protests, his objections being as follows:

- *(a) Due to water right under Permit No. 6600 we have made certain extensive investments that will be irreparably damaged if this application ... is granted, investments being from private funds.
- "(b) The diversion point (as originally described) ... is on ... a section privately owned ... over which the applicant has not any right of way."

Protestant Schell claims a riparian right as well as an appropriative right under Application 11177 Permit 6600. As to present and past use by himself or predecessors he states:

"Stockwatering and irrigation, but due to insufficient water full development could not be made in recent years. At present we have need of water now to irrigate approximately 500 acres of grain now seeded; also watering of livestock."

Protestant Schell describes his point of diversion as being located within the SW¹/₄ NE¹/₄ of Section 12, T29S R32E, MDB&M, and mentions no conditions under which his protest may be disregarded and dismissed.

Walker Rankin and Leroy Rankin protest for reasons they state as follows:

"Basin Creek ... is the main creek feeding Walkers Basin Creek. It appears that the proposed ... project purports to divert water from one watershed to another. Since we are successors in interest to the cldest water users from Walkers Basin Creek ... and 3 or 4 miles downstream from the proposed diversion, the same cannot but affect the underground water supply under our lands. Our lands are in the heart of Walkers Basin and we are farming the same lands of the original settlers who were our father and grandparents ... Diversion of water from our main watershed will unquestionably affect the life of our irrigable lands."

These protestants base their claim of a right to the use of water upon "prior and continuous use since 1870, 1872, 1873, 1876 and 1890." As to the extent of present and past use the protest reads:

"Our holdings are likewise riparian to Walkers Basin Creek which flows through the heart of our lands. One hundred sixty acres in Section 22 was the original homesite of A. T. Lightner, Sr. Diversion and use of water commenced in 1858 and has been continuous ever since. One hundred twenty acres in said Section 22 and 80 acres in Section 15 just north was occupied by W. Rankin, Sr. in about 1865 and has been kept in continuous beneficial use by himself or his family since that time. The water runs through the land and is used the year round for irrigation of meadow land, stockwater and for diversion to a storage lake for irrigation purposes."

The protestants: points of diversion are said to be located within T29S R32E.

In that connection the protest reads:

The point where Basin Creek first enters our lands is on Section 15 and continues to flow southwesterly through the heart of our irrigated lands for approximately 3 miles.

The protestants state that their protest may not be disregarded and dismissed with their consent, under any conditions. The protest is accompanied by a plat purporting to show the location of Walker Basin Creek and its tributaries, and the ownership of certain lands.

Answers

The applicant answers protestants Beaudreau, Cannon and Schell as follows:

"Applicant and his predecessors in ownership have continuously diverted water at the point designated in the application through the ditch described in said application to the south half ... of Section 6 ... in an amount in excess of the amount covered by the application for fifty ... years.

*(originally)

"The right to divert said water ... was appropriated ... in 1893 and the Notice ... was recorded ... wherein Thomas Williams, applicant's predecessor ... gave notice that he appropriated and claimed ... 150", measured under a he pressure

"Applicant ... states that during the flush runoff period between December 15 and March 31 he should be able to fill the reservoir designated ... without in any way affecting the reservoir covered by Application No. 11177, Permit 6600 designated in the protests of Betty W. Beaudreau and R. Vern Schell, her tenant, who are limited by the said permit to take water from February 1 to March 31

"In further answer to the protest of Fred Cannon, applicant asserts that he has such water rights under a prior appropriation than that claimed by ... Cannon whose notice was not given until March 16, 1894 and recorded ... March 17, 1894, in the office of Kern County Recorder, by his predecessor W. H. Johns."

The applicant answers the protestants Rankin as follows:

"Applicant refers to his answer to protests dated April 10, 1953, and incorporates the same by reference.

"Applicant ... alleges that the water sought ... has been used for irrigation purposes on said property continuously since 1893.

"Applicant states that the terrain ... is such that water stored ... and used on the south half ... of Section 6 ... will eventually find its way back into the ... Creek and that said land is riparian to said creek. Applicant further states that said stream flows through Section 6 and that the diversion of applicant pursuant to the appropriation of 1893 in Section 6 is made for the greater beneficial use in irrigating the said lands riparian to said stream in said Section 6.

"Applicant further states that it is his intention to store said water during a period when there is no irrigation required, that is during the flush season. The water so stored will then later be used for irrigation and will find its way back into Walker Basin Creek through percolation and, in the opinion of the applicant, the storage of such water would be beneficial to the protestants as it would hold it at an upstream point until a drier period when it would be of greater benefit to protestants."

Field Investigation

The applicant and the protestants with the approval of the Department having stipulated to the submittal of the application and protests upon the

official records of the Department, a field investigation was conducted on December 7, 1953, by an engineer of the Division. The applicant and the protestants except Protestant R. Vern Schell were in attendance during the investigation.

Records Relied Upon

Applications 11177, 15180 and all data and information on file therewith; Division Bulletin No. 5 -- "Flow in California Streams" -- 1923; United States Geological Survey Quadrangles -- "Emerald Mountain", "Breckenridge Mountain", "Caliente".

Information Secured by Field Investigation

The report covering the field investigation of December 7, 1953, contains among other statements the following:

"R. Vern Schell refused to accept his registered notices at the Post Office and he was not present at the proceedings. He is the lessee of Mrs. Beaudreau's property, so his interests would be similar to hers.

"Walker Basin is an inter-mountain basin in the east central portion of Kern County. The watershed has an area of about 91 square miles ... The area is drained by Walker Basin Creek ... The bordering mountains range from about 4,000 feet to over 8,000 feet in elevation, the easterly and northerly rim ranging from 1,000 to 3,000 feet higher than the southerly, westerly and northwesterly rim.

"The watershed above the applicant's proposed point of diversion contains about eleven square miles of the northeasterly, or higher portion of the basin. The watersheds above Protestants Beaudreau and Cannon contain the same area and are about 22.5 and 20 square miles, respectively. The watershed above Protestants Rankin contains about 80 square miles.

"A few spot measurements were made with a current meter, on the day of the investigation and are as follows:

*Walker Basin Creek at outlet from basin -- 9 a.m. Swarp Section 21, T29S R32E -- 6.4 cfs.

Basin Creek at applicant's point of diversion -- 11 a.m. SW NW Section 5, T 29S R33E, 0.25 cfs.

*Creek at Beaudreau diversion, Application 11177 -- 3.30 p.m. SW_4^1 NE $_4^1$ Section 12, T29S, R32E, 1.25 cfs.

*Cannon's ditch intake -- 4.30 p.m. SW_{4}^{1} Section 6, T29S, R33E, 0.8 cfs.

'Below junction of Basin Creek and North Fork. All flow from Basin Creek above the junction diverted out of local watershed -- 4 p.m. SW¹/₄ Section 6, T29S R33E, 1.0 cfs.'

"The last measurable rain had been over 1 inch on December 1, 1953.

"All of the water at the applicant's proposed point of diversion was being diverted, and spread on meadow lands, in the next valley to the south and entered the valley above Cannon's intake. Cannon was diverting all of the water and was spreading it on pasture lands in the NE4 of Section 12. A portion of the return water would enter the main channel above the Beaudreau diversion.

Beaudreau's lessee was diverting most of the water from the stream, passing it through his reservoir and spreading it on grain land in the south one-half of Section 12. The reservoir was filled to within about 1 foot of the overflow.

*Protestant Cannon stated that the stream above the applicant's point of diversion was dry prior to the rains in November and that the stream usually dried up every summer. The other streams in the area carry some water all year.

*The outflow from the basin is perennial, but in the late summer of 1951 was very low.

"All parties agreed that flow from the area is somewhat more than it was prior to the Arvin and Bakersfield earthquakes in July and August, 1952.

"Protestant Beaudreau owns Section 5, T29S R33E, MDB&M, in which the proposed point of diversion lies. She also owns riparian lands in Section 12 and 13, T29S R32E. Her lands are presently leased, with an option to purchase by Protest/R. Vern Schell. Use of water on the place ... is for irrigating grain and pasture lands She estimates that during the 1953 season approximately 200 acres were irrigated.

*Protestant Cannon owns (portions) of Section 12, which is partially riparian and (portions) of Section 7, T29S R33E. He has ... rights ... under Application 3686. He ... irrigates about 15 acres ... in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 12, by flooding. Diversion was measured at about 0.8 cfs and the total capacity of his ditch is probably about 2 cfs.

*Protestant Schell's interest is identical with Protestant Beaudreau's.

"Protestants Rankin own and irrigate lands in Section 15, 21, and 22, T29S, R32E. They undoubtedly have riparian rights and several prior rights and use has been continuous for many years. They have irrigated about 90 acres of natural pasture and alfalfa by ditch and flooding in Sections 15, 21, and 22, and also approximately 100 acres of meadow land in Sections 21 and 22 are subirrigated. The irrigated lands are of loose texture and return to the underground is undoubtedly fairly high. Rising water appears in the NE4 of Section 21 and outflow 3/4 of a mile downstream was measured at about 6.4 cfs.

"The applicant proposes to divert through an ancient ditch His reservoir lies in a small draw between the two streams and water from the ditch can be diverted to the draw above the reservoir. His proposed use is for irrigation of about 80 acres Roughly one half of the area is bottom lands that are partially sub-irrigated, the balance of the area is moderately sloping hillsides that have a thin soil mantle. He plans on irrigating natural pasture by ditch and flooding. The soils are generally loose and return water will be relatively large.

"The point of diversion and the ditch are on lands owned by Mrs. Beaudreau. The ditch ... was used by predessors of the applicant under a prior right. Protestant Beaudreau claims that the right to use the ditch has been lost by over 5 years of non-user, and she will not permit the applicant to use it As far as the amount of water applied for is concerned, she stated she would not object if she was assured that he did not divert to storage until her reservoir was filled.

"Cannon's protest was more against the proposed method of use, rather than the amount to be stored. Most of the use of water by the applicant will be above Cannon's diversion, so he will probably be benefited rather than injured by the project.

*Protestants Rankin might have some injury in years of extremely small runoff. Their protest is more of a general protest against the potential number of reservoirs that might be built than against this specific project.

"Mr. Angus is to have the area surveyed to ascertain if he can get gravity diversion to the reservoir on his own property from the same stream."

In a summary of his report the investigator states "There undoubtedly is unappropriated water during years of normal or above-normal precipitation."

Information From Other Sources

By letter dated April 6, 1954 the Division advised the applicant:

"In accordance with your letter of April 2, we have amended your water right Application 15180 to indicate that the proposed point of diversion will be moved downstream to a point 2000 feet south of the northeast corner of Section 6, T29S, R33E, MDB&M. We note that the land at this new point of diversion is owned by you."

According to maps of the locality Basin Creek after passing the applicant's proposed point of diversion continues southwesterly for about 2 miles to Walker Basin. The same stream for the remainder of its course appears to be called Walker Basin Creek. It meanders for some 5 miles across Walker Basin, passes through about 15 miles of hills separating Walker Basin from San Joaquin Valley, discharges into Caliente Creek, the latter continuing some 4 miles further and sinking on the floor of San Joaquin Valley floor about 11 miles southeast of Bakersfield.

According to Division Bulletin No. 5 (page 212) - "Flow in California Streams" - the flow of Caliente Creek is estimated as having averaged 96 acrefect per annum per square mile of tributary watershed over a 50 year period; and the distribution of that runoff by months is estimated to have been as follows:

Month	Percentage of Season Runoff
January	12.9
February March	16.9
April May	21.4 17.4
July	8.9 4.3
August September	0
October November	0.9 1.5
December	2.4

Application 11177, Permit 6600 held by protestant Beaudreau and mentioned in her protest against Application 15180 authorizes that protestant to divert 50 acre-feet per annum from Walker Basin Creek at a point within the SW1 NE1 of Section 12, T29S R32E, MDBRM, the water to be collected from about February 1 to about March 31 of each year, stored in a reservoir and utilized for irrigation, stockwatering and recreational purposes. Diversion according to Application 11177 is to be effected by means of an earth and rock dam, storage by an off-stream reservoir, the reservoir flooding 4 acres and having a capacity of 42 acre-feet. The application states "The estimated capacity of the diversion works proposed is 24 cfs, 20-30 days a year maximum during flood stage or 3 cfs when water flows steady ..."

Application 11177 as originally filed sought to appropriate 3 cubic feet per second from December 1 to July 31 and 50 acre-feet per annum collected during that same period. It was protested by several parties, including Walter Rankin and Leroy Rankin who now protest Application 15180. It was the subject of a field investigation on July 12, 1946. According to the report covering that investigation protests were voluntarily withdrawn upon consent by the applicant to an amendment of the application limiting diversions thereunder to a total of 50 acre-feet per annum collected during February and March only. The report of field investigation contains, among others, the following passages:

^{* ...} the stream extends some h miles above the intake. It is fed by springs and for the first two miles rises and sinks along the channel throughout the year. At the time there was about 5 M. I. flowing at applicant's intake which sank as it entered the basin about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile below. Usually there is no surface flow after June 1. Some water is also contributed from the Joe Walker mine nearby when in operation.

"The land to be irrigated is of very loose texture and in all probability a large part of the water applied to the land would percolate into the underground water

"The basin has two other tributaries ... perhaps 1/3 of the distance down the basin water appears on the surface, subirrigates permanent pasture and is diverted to alfalfa and other irrigated crops. At the outlet of the basin ... estimated flow was 3 cfs. This is used, however, for a number of miles below to water upwards of 3000 head of cattle and to operate a small power plant and irrigate 20 acres of alfalfa. Later in the season the overflow from the basin is said to be considerably less; also some 75 acres formerly irrigated ... have not been irrigated of recent years and it is the intention of most of the protestants to sink wells in order to supplement the present gravity supply, indicating that the surplus if any is not great. All of the gravity diversions, it is understood, antedate the Water Commission Act ..."

A memorandum covering a field visit to the Beaudreau property and to the Angus property by an engineer of the Division on September 4, 1952, in response to an inquiry by Betty W. Beaudreau, contains statements as follows:

"In connection with the dam being constructed by Mr. Angus it does not appear that there will be much, if any, interference with Mrs. Beaudreau's appropriative right

"It was estimated that approximately two second-feet of surface flow was entering the basin ... but surface flow disappeared before reaching the south line of Section 12. There are numerous cienega and boggy areas ... in Section 6 and ... Section 1.

"The Angus dam ... lies in a small draw between Walker Basin and Bates Creeks, and will have a very small watershed

"Water for the reservoir will be diverted from Walker Basin Creek through an ancient diversion ditch in Section 5, owned by Beaudreau, that leads southerly to the Bates Creek watershed

"It appeared that over one-half of the water entering Walker Basin comes from North Fork and Bates Creeks, whose junction is below the old diversion so interference with Mrs. Beaudreau's appropriative right to store water between February 1 and March 31 will be negligible."

Discussion

The change in location of point of diversion requested in the applicant's letter of April 2, 1954 and approved by Division letter of April 6, 1954,

apparently cannot affect any other diverter from the same source, the evidence indicating that no tributaries enter and no diversions head on that stream between the point where the applicant first proposed to divert and the point to which he requested his intake to be shifted.

Flow at the proposed point of diversion in a normal year, arrived at by multiplying area of watershed by average runoff per unit of area, may approximate 11 x 96 or 1,056 acre-feet per annum. Of that total, flows may be supposed to occur during the months the applicant proposes to collect as follows:

Month	Percentage of Seasonal Runoff	Probable Runoff during Month
December	2.4	25 •3
January	12.9	136.2
February	14.69	157•3
March	<u>15.4</u>	162.6
Total	45.6%	481.4 acre-feet

The figures indicate that supply probably exceeds greatly the 15 acre-feet per amount hat the applicant seeks to appropriate.

It is not apparent that the diversion of 15 acre-feet between December 1 and March 31 will injure any lower user. Such diversion cannot prevent the enjoyment by Protestant Beaudreau and/or by her tenant, Protestant Schell, of rights under Application 11177, which is the only filing on the source in question, so far as the records disclose, that involves storage. Although direct diversion for irrigation is stated in the report of field investigation to have been in progress on December 7, 1953, presumably under riparian and ancient appropriative rights, the data do not indicate that the situation of the diverters would have been materially worsened by the gradual

accumulation by the applicant of 15 acre-feet in his proposed reservoir. It is significant that the watershed above the applicant's proposed point of diversion is but a portion of the watershed contributory to the protestants' supply and that on December 7, 1953, when diversions for irrigation were in progress, flows at the applicant's proposed point of diversion and at the Beaudreau intake were respectively 0.25 cubic foot and 1.25 cubic feet per second and the flow of Walker Basin Creek as it leaves the basin was 6.4 cubic feet per second.

In view of the shift of the applicant's point of diversion onto his own property the objections of Protestants Beaudreau and Schell that the applicant lacks right of access thereto appear invalid.

Summary and Conclusions

The applicant seeks to appropriate 15 acre-feet per annum from Basin Creek, the water to be collected between December 1 and March 31 and stored for later use for irrigation.

The application is protested by four parties on the general ground that the diversion that the applicant proposes will leave too little water in Basin Creek to satisfy prior downstream rights. Two of the protestants further objected that the applicant lacks right of access to his proposed point of diversion.

The parties stipulated to a determination of the matter by proceedings in lieu of hearing. A field investigation was conducted on December 7, 1953. The investigator found flows of 0.25 cubic foot per second at the applicant's proposed point of diversion, 0.8 cubic foot per second at Protestant Cannon's intake, 1.25 cubic feet per second at the intake used by Protestants Beaudreau and Schell, and 6.4 cubic feet per second at the outlet of Walker Basin below the lowermost protestant. The investigator reported

that irrigation was in progress at the time of the investigation, that one inch of rain had fallen 6 days prior to the investigation, that unappropriated water probably exists in years of normal or above-normal precipitation, that the applicant's proposed point of diversion and the ditch the applicant proposes to use are on land owned by Protestant Beaudreau, that Protestant Beaudreau is unwilling to grant right of access, that Protestant Beaudreau would not press her objection if assured that the applicant would not divert to storage until her reservoir was filled, that the applicant will investigate to determine whether he may not find a diversion point on his own property from which he may secure a gravity supply.

Subsequent to the investigation the applicant requested amendment of his application to provide for a change of his proposed point of diversion to a point on his own property, a few hundred feet downstream from the point originally described. The Division acceded to his request.

Maps indicate river distances of about 2 miles from applicant's point of diversion (after amendment of the application) to entrance of Basin Creek into Walker Basin, 5 miles across Walker Basin, 15 miles through hills separating Walker Basin from San Joaquin Valley. The maps also indicate that the source is called Basin Creek until it reaches Walker Basin, that as it continues across that Basin and on through the hills it is called Walker Basin Creek, that Walker Basin Creek joins Caliente Creek, the latter sinking on the floor of San Joaquin Valley, some h miles below its emergence from the hills.

Under Application 11177, Permit 6600 Protestant Beaudreau may collect 50 acre-feet during February and March of each year from Walker Basin Creek at a point roughly 2 miles below the applicant's proposed point of diversion, for irrigation, stockwatering and recreational purposes.

It has been estimated that Caliente Creek discharges an average of 96 acre-feet per annum per square mile of watershed and that 45.6% of that discharge occurs between December 1 and March 31. On the supposition that the watershed above the applicant's proposed intake produces at the same rate as the Caliente watershed as a whole, flow reaching the applicant's proposed point of diversion between December 1 and March 31 may average roughly 481.4 acre-feet, an amount greatly in excess of that required to satisfy both Protestant Beaudreau's rights under Application 11177 and the right the applicant seeks to acquire under Application 15180.

Diversions under Application 15180 cannot injure water users along
Basin Creek or Walker Basin Creek before December 1 or after March 31 because
of the limitation of the collection period in that application. Collection of
15 acre-feet between December 1 and March 31 under Application 15180 is unlikely
to injure any downstream user because of the relative abundance of water at that
season and the fact that the applicant's project commands but a fraction of the
watershed tributary to the points at which the downstream users divert.

The circumstances point to the conclusion that unappropriated water usually exists during the proposed collection period in the source from which the applicant seeks to appropriate, that such water may be taken and used beneficially in the manner proposed without injury to downstream users and that the protests against the application are insufficient to warrant its denial. It is the opinion of this office therefore that application 15180 should be approved and permit issued, subject to the usual terms and conditions. It is the opinion of this office further that for clarity of understanding between the applicant and Protestants Beaudreau and Schell any permit issued in connection with application 15180 should contain also a special term and condition emphasizing the priority of application 11177 over application 15180.

Order

Application 15180 for a permit to appropriate water having been filed with the Division of Water Resources as above stated, a field investigation having been conducted and the State Engineer now being fully informed in the premises:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Application 15180 be approved and that a permit be issued to the applicant subject to such of the usual terms and conditions as may be appropriate and subject also to the following special terms and conditions, to wit:

Issuance of this permit shall not operate to the prejudice of any prior rights, including the right of Betty Beaudreau under Application 11177 to divert not to exceed 50 acre-feet collected from Walker Basin Creek between February 1 and March 31 of each year.

WITNESS my hand and the seal of the Department of Public Works of
the State of California this 22nd day of December 1954

A. D. Edmonston State Engineer